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ABSTRACT

The nature of institutions of higher education and their interaction with the larger society is discussed. The societal environment in which the university operates is said to be characterized by national withdrawal from the goals of equal opportunity and from humane principles that make up the basis for a viable educational system. In light of recent economic and fiscal problems, restricted access to college education for blacks and minorities is said to be occurring. Two important facts about the black college experience are said to be the vital role played by traditionally black institutions and the equally important role played by public institutions. Although the dismantling of dual educational systems is seen as necessary, ways to preserve valuable attributes of those institutions that have historically served the minority community within the framework of integration need to be developed. The concept of integration is said not to be at issue here, but the manner in which integration is conducted. Integration that becomes synonymous with the destruction of historic black institutions and black community strengths is not accepted. (Author/AM)

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AT
INAUGURAL CEREMONIES
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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THE HISTORICALLY BLACK PUBLIC COLLEGE IN AN INTEGRATED SOCIETY

THIS IS AN AUSPICIOUS OCCASION. AN INAUGURATION MARKS NOT ONLY A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP, BUT ALSO A RENEWAL AND REDEDICATION TO THE VALUES AND THE PRINCIPLES EMBODIED IN AN INSTITUTION. AND IT SHOULD LEAD US TO REFLECT UPON THE NATURE OF THE INSTITUTION AND ITS INTERACTION WITH THE LARGER SOCIETY.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ON THESE AND RELATED ISSUES WITH YOU TODAY.

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MY FIRST OBSERVATION IS ONE THAT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS TO ALL, YET THE PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE IS SUCH THAT IT MUST BE REPEATED AGAIN AND AGAIN. AND THAT IS, THAT THE NATION IS TODAY IN THE GRIPS OF A TERRIBLE ECONOMIC DEPRESSION THAT IS CRIPPLING THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE -- BLACK AND WHITE -- AND IS REVERSING THE LIMITED GAINS MADE BY BLACKS AND OTHER MINORITIES IN THE 1960s.

ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION IS TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO SEE PATTERNS AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS WHERE OTHERS MAY SEE ONLY ISOLATED PHENOMENA. THUS IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT THIS DEPRESSION REVEALS JUST HOW FRAGILE AND INTERDEPENDENT OUR NATION REALLY IS.

FOR YEARS BLACK PEOPLE WERE PROTESTING UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY AND WERE ALL BUT IGNORED BY NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. YET, IT WAS THIS FIRST SIGN THAT THE ECONOMY WAS ACTUALLY MALFUNCTIONING THAT COULD HAVE TIPPED OFF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO THE FACT THAT THE RISING TIDE OF BLACK HARDSHIP MEANT HARD TIMES IN STORE FOR WHITES AS WELL.

NOW THAT HAS COME TO PASS. LAUNDERED OFFICIAL UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS ASIDE, THE TRUE RATE OF JOBLESSNESS

IS ABOUT 14 PERCENT FOR WHITES AND 26 PERCENT FOR BLACKS. ABOUT ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR AMERICANS WILL BE OUT OF WORK AT SOME TIME DURING THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS.

SO THE BASIC INTERESTS OF WHITES AND BLACKS INTERSECT AT VARIOUS POINTS. THEY ARE INTERRELATED BECAUSE A SYSTEM THAT PERSISTENTLY KEEPS BLACK PEOPLE OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM ALSO KEEPS MANY MORE MILLIONS OF WHITE PEOPLE FROM THE JOBS AND INCOME THEY NEED, TOO.

WE SAW THIS REVEALED MOST CLEARLY BY THE EFFECTS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF VARIOUS GREAT SOCIETY PROGRAMS. MORE WHITES THAN BLACKS HAD BEEN IN COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS, IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING, ON WELFARE ROLLS, IN A BROAD VARIETY OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS POPULARLY THOUGHT OF AS "BLACK."

AMERICANS ARE MISTAKENLY LOCKED INTO THEIR OWN NARROW RACIAL OR REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES WITHOUT PROPERLY NOTING THE MESHING OF INTERESTS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES. A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THIS IS THE WIDESPREAD INDIFFERENCE TO THE POSSIBLE BANKRUPTCY OF NEW YORK CITY. FOR MANY OF US WEST OF THE HUDSON RIVER, NEW YORK'S FISCAL PROBLEMS ARE OF LITTLE CONCERN. BUT IF NEW YORK CAN'T

PAY ITS BILLS AND ITS EMPLOYEES, THE RESULT WILL BE UTTER CHAOS, RANGING FROM BANK FAILURES TO FOOD RIOTS. THE POSITION OF NEW YORK'S 1.6 MILLION BLACK PEOPLE, TWENTY TIMES THE NUMBERS OF BLACKS IN THE NASHVILLE AREA, WILL BECOME DESPERATE. THE POSITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WILL ALSO BE ENDANGERED BECAUSE OF THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF NEW YORK'S PROBLEMS.

AND EUROPEAN LEADERS TELL US THAT DEFAULT WOULD MEAN DECLINE OF THE VALUE OF THE DOLLAR, DISRUPTION OF THE WORLD ECONOMY, AND A CRUSHING WORLD-WIDE DEPRESSSION.

IT IS A MEASURE OF OUR LEADERSHIP'S INDIFFERENCE TO POOR PEOPLE AND TO THE CITIES THAT THE SITUATION HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO DETERIORATE TO THE EXTENT IT HAS, AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATION COOLY REFUSES TO DO FOR A CITY WHAT IT SO WILLINGLY DID FOR MAJOR CORPORATIONS IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE, AND FOR FOREIGN NATIONS.

THE NEW YORK CASE IS BUT THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF WHAT AMOUNTS TO WARFARE ON THE POOR, THE BLACK, AND THE CITIES OF OUR NATION. AT A TIME OF INCREASED FOOD COSTS AND UNEMPLOYMENT, HIGH OFFICIALS TALK ABOUT GETTING RID OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. AT A TIME OF INCREASED NEED

FOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS, THE ADMINISTRATION TIES A TAX CUT FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS TO BUDGET CUTS IN SOCIAL PROGRAMS BENEFITTING THE POOR.

WE STAND AT THE EVE OF THE NATION'S BICENTENNIAL ENMESHED IN RACIAL DIVISIONS, ECONOMIC DEPRESSION, URBAN DECLINE, AND A HOST OF OTHER PROBLEMS THAT CRY OUT FOR SOLUTION. IT IS A NATIONAL CRISIS DEMANDING ABOVE ALL, ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP.

BUT THAT LEADERSHIP HAS NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING. NEITHER THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION NOR THE DEMOCRATIC-CONTROLLED CONGRESS HAS EXHIBITED ANYTHING MORE THAN A SENSE OF HOPELESS FLOUNDERING.

THIS THEN, IS THE LARGER SOCIETAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THIS UNIVERSITY, AND ALL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, MUST OPERATE. IT IS AN ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERIZED BY NATIONAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GOAL OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, AND FROM THE HUMANE PRINCIPLES THAT MUST BE THE BASIS FOR A VIABLE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. AND THIS HAS BEEN COMPOUNDED BY ECONOMIC AND FISCAL PROBLEMS THAT TRANSLATE INTO RESTRICTED ACCESS TO COLLEGE EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY FOR BLACKS AND FOR THE POOR OF ALL RACES.

THIS IS A CRUCIAL ISSUE FOR BLACK PEOPLE, FOR OF ALL THE GAINS WE HAVE MADE IN THE RECENT PAST, INCREASED ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IS AMONG THE MOST SIGNIFICANT. BLACK COLLEGE ENROLLMENT HAS ALMOST TRIPLED IN THE PAST DECADE, BUT THIS CAN BE NO CAUSE FOR COMPLACENCY. IT MERELY MEASURES THE EXTENT TO WHICH BLACKS WERE DENIED EQUAL ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE PAST. INDEED, BLACK PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION STILL LAGS NOTICEABLY BEHIND WHITE PARTICIPATION.

ONE OUT OF FOUR WHITE YOUTHS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 24 ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A COLLEGE, BUT ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN A SIXTH OF BLACK YOUTHS ARE. TWO-AND-A-HALF TIMES AS MANY WHITES AS BLACKS IN THE UNDER-34 AGE GROUP HOLD COLLEGE DEGREES. AND THE ATTRITION RATE AMONG BLACKS IN COLLEGE IS HIGHER; ALMOST HALF OF BLACK COLLEGE ENTRANTS NEVER FINISH THEIR DEGREE WORK. BLACK ENROLLMENT IN PROFESSIONAL AND GRADUATE SCHOOLS IS ON THE ORDER OF ABOUT FOUR PERCENT, A FIGURE THAT ACCURATELY MEASURES THE LIMITS STILL PLACED ON BLACK ADVANCEMENT.

WHEN WE LOOK AT THE BLACK COLLEGE EXPERIENCE TWO IMPORTANT FACTS STAND OUT. ONE IS THE VITAL ROLE

PLAYED BY TRADITIONALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS; THE OTHER IS THE EQUALLY IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

WHILE THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES ENROLL LESS THAN HALF OF ALL BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS, TWO-THIRDS OF BACHELORS DEGRESS EARNED BY BLACKS ARE GRANTED FROM THOSE COLLEGES. AND WHILE WHITES ATTENDING FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES ARE DIVIDED ABOUT EQUALLY BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS, FOUR TIMES AS MANY BLACKS ATTEND PUBLICLY-SUPPORTED COLLEGES AS ATTEND PRIVATE COLLEGES.

THUS, THOSE SCHOOLS, SUCH AS TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, THAT ARE BOTH PUBLIC AND HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS, ASSUME A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROSPECTS FOR BLACK PEOPLE.

THAT SPECIAL PLACE HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY RECOGNIZED BY TOO MANY AMERICANS. BARELY TOLERATED, DISCRIMINATED AGAINST AND STARVED OF BOTH FUNDS AND RECOGNITION IN THE PAST, TRADITIONALLY BLACK COLLEGES ARE TODAY UNDER ATTACK FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. THE VERY FORCES THAT ONCE SOUGHT TO RESTRICT THE GROWTH OF BLACK INSTITUTIONS IN THE SETTING OF SEGREGATION AND DUAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS, TODAY SUGGEST THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATES OF

INTEGRATION MEAN THAT THERE CAN NO LONGER BE A PLACE FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

THUS, UNDER THE CLOAK OF A SUPPOSED CONCERN FOR INTEGRATION, A DEATH SENTENCE IS BEING PROPOSED FOR CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS SERVING THE NEEDS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

IT IS CLEAR THAT THE DISMANTLING OF DUAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS IS RIGHT AND NECESSARY. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ROLE OF PUBLIC BLACK COLLEGES HAS ALTERED WITH CHANGING CONDITIONS. AND IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT AN OPEN, PLURALISTIC, INTEGRATED SOCIETY HAS AMPLE ROOM FOR HEALTHY INSTITUTIONS THAT, WHILE OPEN TO ALL, REFLECT IN IMPORTANT WAYS THE NATURE AND ASPIRATIONS OF MINORITY COMMUNITIES.

INTEGRATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET. IT IS NOTHING LESS THAN HYPOCRISY TO BRAND TRADTIONALLY BLACK COLLEGES AS SEGREGATED WHEN A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THEIR FACULTY AND STUDENT BODY IS NON-BLACK. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SUPPOSEDLY "INTEGRATED" NON-BLACK COLLEGES HAVE STUDENT BODIES THAT ARE 95 PERCENT WHITE AND FACULTIES THAT ARE 99 PERCENT WHITE. WHEN BLACK PARTICIPATION IN THE PREDOMINATELY WHITE COLLEGES

IS AT THE LEVEL OF WHITE PARTICIPATION IN TODAY'S TRADITIONALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS WE WILL BEGIN TO APPROACH REAL INTEGRATION, NOT BEFORE!

IT IS INTERESTING -- AND ALARMING -- TO NOTE THAT THE VOCAL PROPONENTS OF DISMANTLING TRADITIONALLY BLACK COLLEGES IN THE NAME OF INTEGRATION ARE UNUSUALLY SILENT WHEN IT COMES TO URGING GREATER INTEGRATION OF ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY AND STUDENT BODY AT THE OVERWHELMINGLY WHITE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. NOR IS THERE MUCH INTEREST RAISED IN INTEGRATING STATE BOARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, PERCEIVED AS A "BLACK" COLLEGE, IS GOVERNED BY A BOARD OF REGENTS THAT NUMBERS 17 PEOPLE, ONLY TWO OF THEM BLACK. THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, A SUPPOSEDLY "INTEGRATED" PUBLIC INSTITUTION, HAS NO BLACKS ON ITS GOVERNING BOARD.

INTEGRATION, I REPEAT, IS A TWO-WAY STREET. IT CANNOT BE INVOKED TO STRIP BLACKS OF THEIR LEADERSHIP ROLES AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FUNCTIONS WHILE LEAVING WHITE PRIVILEGE AND WHITE POWER INTACT AND UNSHARED.

WE ARE TODAY AT A SIGNIFICANT PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF BLACK EDUCATION. THE VERY FUTURE OF TRADITIONALLY BLACK PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IS AT ISSUE. TWO FACTS ARE PLAIN -- THERE CAN BE NO RETURN TO A SEGREGATED DUAL SYSTEM OF BLACK EXCLUSIVENESS ON SOME CAMPUSES AND WHITE EXCLUSIVENESS ON OTHERS. AND THERE SHOULD BE WAYS, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTEGRATION, TO PRESERVE VALUABLE ATTRIBUTES OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE HISTORICALLY SERVED THE MINORITY COMMUNITY.

THESE INSTITUTIONS HAVE STRENGTHS THAT MAKE THEM PARTICULARLY VALUABLE TODAY. THEY CAN BE CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO PROVIDE WHITES AND BLACKS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE A COLLEGE EDUCATION, AND FOR THE NATION TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ITS CITIZENS. IF WE LOOK AT SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT GOALS IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY TODAY, WE SEE THAT THERE IS A UNIQUE, AND DISTINCTIVE ROLE FOR THE HISTORICALLY BLACK PUBLIC INSTITUTION.

ONE SUCH GOAL IS EXPANDED EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLEGE EDUCATION FOR BLACKS. I HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE CONTINUED GAP BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION. DESPITE THE ACCELERATED PACE OF .

BLACK RECRUITMENT BY WHITE COLLEGES, THOSE INSTITUTIONS HAVE LARGELY FAILED TO ATTRACT PROPORTIONATE NUMBERS OF BLACK STUDENTS, HAVE FAILED TO KEEP AND TO GRADUATE MANY OF THOSE THEY HAVE ENROLLED, AND HAVE YET TO INDICATE THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS DISADVANTAGED YOUNGSTERS IN A RACIALLY-DISCRIMINATORY SOCIETY BRING WITH THEM.

CLEARLY, THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN EDUCATING NEW GENERATIONS OF YOUNG BLACK PEOPLE. BECAUSE OF THEIR HISTORY AND THEIR INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS, SUCH COLLEGES SUPPLY BLACK STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL CONCERN FOR THEIR NEEDS AND WITH THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY THAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE.

A SECOND GOAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY IS EXPANDED EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WHITE STUDENTS WHO COME FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS. IN PART AS A RESULT OF THE DRIVE TO EXPAND THE NUMBERS OF BLACK COLLEGE GRADUATES, ATTENTION HAS ALSO BECOME FOCUSED ON THOSE MILLIONS UPON MILLIONS OF WHITE PEOPLE WHO ARE POOR AND FOR WHOM COLLEGE IS A BRIGHT LADDER TO THE FUTURE.

I AM SUGGESTING THAT THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES, WITH THEIR TRADITION OF EDUCATING DISADVANTAGED BLACK YOUTH, WILL BECOME THE PRIME VEHICLE FOR EDUCATING DISADVANTAGED WHITE YOUTH. MANY PREDOMINATELY WHITE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE ALWAYS CATERED TO THE MIDDLE CLASS AND TO PREP SCHOOL GRADUATES, AND THEIR FAILURES WITH POOR BLACK STUDENTS ARE DUPLICATED BY THEIR FAILURE TO EDUCATE POOR WHITE STUDENTS, AS WELL. THE TRADITIONALLY BLACK COLLEGE THEN, IS A NATIONAL RESOURCE THAT HOLDS THE PROMISE OF SERVING WHITE YOUNGSTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED BY THE WHITE COLLEGE SYSTEM.

A THIRD GOAL IS DIVERSITY. THE VERY EXISTENCE OF A PRIVATE COLLEGE SYSTEM TESTIFIES TO THE RECOGNITION THAT OUR SOCIETY NEEDS A VARIETY OF INSTITUTIONS TO FULFILL THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS. THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS NOT A MONOLITH IN WHICH ALL INSTITUTIONS ARE INVESTED WITH A HOMOGENIZED SAMENESS UNDER CENTRALIZED DIRECTION. IT IS RATHER, A MOSAIC IN WHICH PUBLIC COLLEGES, PRIVATE COLLEGES AND RELIGIOUSLY-ORIENTED INSTITUTIONS OFFER DIFFERENT PATHS AND DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES. THEY RIGHTLY REFLECT THE PLURALISM EMBEDDED IN THE STRUCTURE OF OUR SOCIETY.

IT IS THUS IMPORTANT, BOTH FOR OUR PLURALISTIC SOCIETY AS A WHOLE AND FOR ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, THAT KEY INSTITUTIONS SERVING THE MINORITY COMMUNITY AND PROVIDING IT WITH LEADERSHIP AND WITH OPPORTUNITIES, PRESERVE MUCH OF THEIR CHARACTER AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION. THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES ARE ALREADY FAR MORE INTEGRATED THAN THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS, AND THEY CAN ABSORB STILL MORE WHITE STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS WITHOUT NECESSARILY LOSING THOSE SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES THAT MAKE THEM SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

A HEALTHY PLURALISM HAS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS THAT, WHILE OPEN TO ALL, REFLECT THE HISTORY, CULTURE AND INTERESTS OF MINORITY GROUPS. SUCH INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY WITH ADDED REPRESENTATION FROM THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY, CAN PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR MINORITY ASPIRATIONS WHILE SERVING AS VITALLY NEEDED BRIDGES BETWEEN THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES.

A FOURTH NATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL GOAL IS THAT BLACK CITIZENS HAVE THEIR FAIR SHARE OF OUR NATION'S LEADERSHIP ROLES. AND ONE OF THE BASIC SOURCES OF BLACK LEADERSHIP TODAY IS IN THE TRADITIONALLY BLACK COLLEGES. AS THESE BECOME MORE INTEGRATED, THERE MUST NOT BE A

REPETITION OF THE EXPERIENCE WE WITNESSED WHEN THE SOUTH'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTEGRATED. THEN, BLACK TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WERE DEMOTED AND FIRED IN ORDER TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR WHITES.

INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC COLLEGE SYSTEMS MUST MEAN NOT ONLY ADMISSION OF WHITE STUDENTS TO PREVIOUSLY BLACK SCHOOLS, OR OF BLACKS TO PREVIOUSLY WHITE ONES. IT MUST ALSO MEAN THAT BLACK EDUCATORS HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN ALL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. YES, INTEGRATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET AND THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT WHITE PEOPLE TRAVEL UPHILL WHILE BLACKS GO DOWNHILL ALL THE WAY.

INTEGRATION CANNOT BECOME AN EXCUSE FOR STRIPPING FROM BLACK PEOPLE THE FEW LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AVAILABLE TO THEM. INTEGRATION MUST RATHER BECOME THE VEHICLE FOR EXPANDING BLACK OPPORTUNITIES. BEFORE WE CAN ENVISION THE PROSPECTS OF A FUTURE INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF A WHITE PRESIDENT OF A HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTION, WE SHOULD HAVE EVIDENCE OF TRUE INTEGRATION -- FOR EXAMPLE, THE INAUGURATION OF A BLACK PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE.

INTEGRATION HAS BEEN FEARED BY SOME AND WELCOMED BY OTHERS, OFTEN FOR RIGHT REASONS, SOMETIMES FOR WRONG ONES. TO THE EXTENT THAT INTEGRATION REMOVES THE BARRIERS TO MINOIRTY OPPORTUNITIES, TO THE EXTENT THAT IT BRINGS THE RACES CLOSER IN A MORE MEANINGFUL, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP,AND TO THE EXTENT THAT IT ALLOWS FOR DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM THAT REFLECTS THE POSITIVE DIFFERENCES AMONG PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND CULTURES, INTEGRATION OFFERS HOPES FOR A FAIRER, MORE JUST SOCIETY.

THE BLACK COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES THAT INTEGRATION IS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, ONE FOR WHICH MUCH BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED AND SACRIFICES MADE. AT ISSUE IS NOT THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION, BUT THE WAY IN WHICH IT IS CARRIED OUT. THUS, BLACK CITIZENS WILL BE VIGILANT IN ASSURING THAT INTEGRATION DOES NOT BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF HISTORIC BLACK INSTITUTIONS. IT CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO BECOME THE VEHICLE FOR THE DISMANTLING OF BLACK COMMUNITY STRENGTHS. TRUE INTEGRATION SHOULD MEAN THE PRESERVATION OF THOSE INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS IN ALTERED, MODERNIZED FORMS THAT ALLOW THOSE TRADITIONALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS TO USE THEIR HISTORY OF EXPERTISE

AND THEIR UNIQUE RESOURCES TO SERVE THE TOTAL COMMUNITY.

CHANGE IS ALWAYS A PAINFUL, CONFUSING PROCESS. IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR MANY WHITE PEOPLE TO SUBMIT TO THE PRESSURES OF LAW AND CONSCIENCE AND SHED OVERT RACIST ACTIONS. AND IT IS DIFFICULT FOR BOTH WHITES AND BLACKS TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE PROBLEMS OF BUILDING AN INTEGRATED SOCIETY IN WHICH BOTH RACES MUST MAKE CHANGES IN THEIR INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES.

BUT ALL OF US MAY FIND OUR PATHS EASED BY THE RECOGNITION OF THE SIMPLE FACT THAT INTEGRATION IS THE LAW OF THE LAND, A CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE THAT MAY NOT BE REVOKED BY A SCREAMING MOB IN SOUTH BOSTON OR BY THE HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES OF A STATE.

WE ENTER THIS GREAT ADVENTURE, THE INTEGRATED SOCIETY, IN TIMES RENT BY CONFUSION, DIVISION AND MISTRUST. SO MANY WHITE CITIZENS FIND IT HARD TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES MAY BE INTEGRATED AND STILL FULFILL THEIR TRADITIONAL ROLE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY; THAT THEY MAY BE INTEGRATED AND STILL RETAIN A FLAVOR AND DISTINCTIVENESS THAT REFLECTS THE COMMUNITY THEY HAVE SERVED SO LONG AND SO WELL. AND THIS DIFFICULTY IS IN ITSELF A

REFLECTION OF THE NATIONAL WITHDRAWAL FROM CONCERN WITH BLACK NEEDS AND WITH SOCIAL CHANGE.

BUT I HAVE FAITH THAT WE WILL PASS THROUGH THIS ROCKY ROAD AND SURMOUNT THE PEAK. I HAVE FAITH WE WILL OVERCOME THE WASTED TENSIONS OF THE MOMENT AND CONSTRUCT A JUST, INTEGRATED, PLURALISTIC OPEN SOCIETY. I HAVE FAITH THAT THE PRECIOUS IDENTITY OF THE TRADITIONALLY BLACK COLLEGE WILL BE MAINTAINED AND THAT IT WILL FLOURISH AND PROSPER IN THE NEW HISTORICAL STAGE OF ITS PROUD HISTORY. AND I HAVE FAITH THAT THE PROMISE OF AMERICA, THE BRIGHT DREAMS OF FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY SHALL AT LONG LAST, COME TO PASS.

I LEAVE YOU WITH SIMILAR THOUGHTS BY A WHITE SOUTHERN WRITER, THOMAS WOLFE, WHO WROTE:

"I BELIEVE THAT WE ARE LOST HERE IN AMERICA,
BUT I BELIEVE WE SHALL BE FOUND ...
I THINK THE TRUE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA
IS BEFORE US. I THINK THE TRUE FULFILLMENT
OF OUR SPIRIT, OF OUR PEOPLE, OF OUR MIGHTY
AND IMMORTAL LAND, IS YET TO COME.
I THINK THE TRUE DISCOVERY OF OUR DEMOCRACY
IS STILL BEFORE US AND I THINK THAT ALL THOSE

THINGS ARE CERTAIN AS THE MORNING,
AS INEVITABLE AS NOON. I THINK
I SPEAK FOR MOST MEN LIVING WHEN I SAY
THAT OUR AMERICA IS HERE, IS NOW,
AND BECKONS ON BEFORE US. AND THAT
THIS GLORIOUS ASSURANCE IS NOT ONLY
OUR LIVING HOPE BUT OUR DREAM TO BE
ACCOMPLISHED."

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